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Bram Stoker's

# The Lady of the Shroud

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## Note on *The Lady of the Shroud*

As the title suggests, this work does flirt with the supernatural. Yet it is essentially a political novel—a utopian experiment in a fictitious Balkan country, the Land of the Blue Mountains. The story spans the years from 1892 to 1909. It includes a beautiful love story and an adventure tale—a double rescue requiring strength, cunning, and cutting-edge technology. These various aspects are unified by the character of the hero, a purely admirable individual whom we love and admire from the very first and who acquires immense power. How he uses this power is, of course, the test of his worth. Writers of fiction find it much easier to create evil or despicable characters than admirable ones, and Stoker does include one splendid portrait of an individual we love to despise, but the good characters predominate, each one unique and cherished in a different way by the reader.

The pace of the narrative varies greatly from section to section because the author includes business meetings and legal documents in their entirety, his obsessive attention to minutiae slowing down the action for long stretches. Moreover, the mystery surrounding the shroud is drawn out almost to the point of tedium. However, when there is action, it rushes forward. The great diversity of character also enlivens the text, especially since the epistolary form allows us to hear each voice.

For a political interpretation, see Matthew Gibson's *Dracula and the Eastern Question* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2006).

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